

ALDOT's Statewide **Transportation Improvement Program**

This summer, ALDOT hosted several outreach meetings in each of the Regions to seek input on the draft 2024—2027 Statewide Transportation Improvement Program (STIP). At these meetings, ALDOT shared the draft 2024–2027 STIP and asked for input and comments on local, state or federal projects in their areas. Through public involvement and online opportunities to comment, the STIP incorporates Alabamian's perspectives into the decision-making process of building roads and bridges.

The STIP is a federally mandated fouryear funding and scheduling document for transportation projects and programs that include roadway, bridge and other modes of transportation such as railroad, freight, public transit and pedestrian. Projects must be approved on the STIP to receive federal funds. Information sharing and stakeholder involvement is critical to ALDOT in the development of a STIP. Public involvement provides a road map

for assuring everyone's voice is heard and makes a difference in moving Alabama forward.

The STIP incorporates input from stakeholders, local communities and transportation professionals to ensure that the infrastructure projects taken on by ALDOT align with the needs of the residents of Alabama. It serves as a comprehensive blueprint, outlining Alabama's transportation priorities for the next four years. With planning and implementation, the STIP addresses the state's evolving transportation needs.







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ASAP: More Than Just Changing a Tire

The ASAP program at ALDOT is known for changing tires, providing a gallon of gas, and helping move traffic after a crash. However, the ASAP drivers at ALDOT wear many more hats. They are often like counselors, therapists, and first responders.

ASAP drivers are often the first ones on the scene of a traffic incident, so they help to keep the motorist calm and out of harm's way until help can arrive.

Along with working crashes, ASAP drivers drive the interstate looking for motorists needing assistance. One ASAP driver noticed a truck that was swerving and driving recklessly. The motorist pulled over to the side of the road, and when the ASAP driver approached the vehicle, he could see the driver was in a panic. He soon found out that the driver

had dementia and forgot who his daughter was. He thought she was trying to kidnap him. The ASAP driver stayed with the motorist and his daughter and got him calmed down until help could arrive.

ASAP drivers also must be quick on their feet and resourceful. One ASAP driver recalled a time when he stopped to assist a motorist and the driver said their blood sugar had dropped. The ASAP driver happened to have a Gatorade in his truck to offer the motorist.

Our ASAP drivers are on the front lines every day. They are doing much more than just changing tires for the motorists of Alabama. They are doing everything they can to ensure that motorists are safe and that they get roadways cleared quickly. Be sure to say thank you the next time you see them!

Did you Know?

Crash ahead? Traffic congestion along the way? ALDOT keeps drivers informed of traffic conditions and other important updates with 53 permanent digital message signs along Alabama interstates.

The messages on those interstate signs are managed by ALDOT personnel working in Traffic Management Centers (TMC) around the state. When it comes to highway safety reminders, like driving safely around work zones and buckling up, the Traffic Incident Management team in the various regional ALDOT offices prepares those messages.

The signs, technically referred to as "dynamic message signs" (DMS), report roadside incidents such as slowdowns, crashes, construction, lane closures, weather concerns, Amber alerts, and travel-time

alerts. Alerts vary from global messages that cover the entire network (Amber alerts and posted speed limits) to dedicated messages concerning road incidents along specific routes.

Safety and improved traffic flow are two benefits of interstate message boards. When drivers know in advance that there is a crash ahead, they can prepare to slow down and

Elimination of State Motor Pool: Adjustment, Not a Problem

In 2023, Gov. Kay Ivey promised that her Administration would be "open, honest and transparent" and that she would "tighten up government."

One of her first steps was the issuance of Executive Order No. 728, which promoted efficiency and accountability in the use of state vehicles. This order called for the elimination of the state motor pool in the Capitol Complex in downtown Montgomery.

The Office of Fleet Management was created in May 2006 and housed under the Alabama Department of Finance. In March 2013, the Office of Fleet Management, which included the state motor pool, was transferred by executive order to ALDOT. Over many decades, the state motor pool has been utilized to rent out vehicles to other state agencies for travel. It also provided light mechanical work for state vehicles. Since ALDOT already had a method for how to run a motor pool efficiently, the move in 2013 made sense.

In 2020, the Covid-19 pandemic caused state agencies to eliminate

most travel and to conduct meetings via video conferencing. The role of the state motor pool changed drastically, as travel never rebounded to pre-Covid levels.

Dr. Willie Bradley, ALDOT's deputy director for fleet management, says the elimination of the state motor pool will result in other state agencies meeting their travel needs, repairs of agency-owned vehicles and car rentals through the private sector. The new system for other state agencies will be "extremely productive and efficient," Bradley said.

ALDOT will not be impacted, Bradley said.

Bradley said this move is a natural evolution in how state agencies meet their travel needs. It's an "adjustment, not a problem," Bradley said, and will provide "a more innovative method" to managing vehicle needs of state agencies.

not crash into stopped traffic. In some cases, they just might have time to exit the interstate before a crash or a traffic jam.

ALDOT displays nearly 310,000 messages a year on the state's DMS system.

right DMS for Work Zone Safety Awareness, Valentine's Day, St. Patrick's Day and Halloween



ALDOT Pre-Construction Conference Success in Birmingham

ALDOT held its annual pre-construction conference in Birmingham on April 18. The event was a success, with over 500 attendees from across the state.

The conference featured a variety of speakers and presentations on a range of topics related to pre-construction, including highlights of ALDOT's design build efforts, updates on policy and procedures in utilities, geotech, stormwater, and rail, as well as updates on notable projects. There was also a trade show with over 50 exhibitors.

Guest presenters included Mark Bartlett from FHWA, Kevin White from Brasfield & Gorrie, Ricky Branton from Mott MacDonald, Mark Bedard from Lindsay Corporation, Madelyn McNab from GeoCue Group, Courtney Shea from U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, and Sanders Thomas from Bentley Systems. ALDOT speakers included Chief Engineer Ed Austin, Rail Programs Administrator Oretta Barrett, Assistant Pre-Construction Engineer for the Alexander City Area Michael Bergh, State Geotechnical Engineer Renardo Dorsey, State Utilities Engineer Sean Frank, Specifications Engineer John Lucas, Environmental Hydraulic Manager Jason Mastes, Environmental Specialist Bryan Moatts, Environmental Specialist Hunter Nobles, Public Information Officer Josh Phillips, Assistant Design Bureau Chief Adam Sanford, and East Central Region Pre-Construction Engineer Gary Smith.

Attendees gave the conference high marks, praising the quality of the speakers and the content of the presentations. They also appreciated the opportunity to network with other professionals in the pre-construction field.

The next ALDOT pre-construction conference is scheduled for April 2024 in Montgomery.

2023 National Work Zone Awareness Week

National Work Zone Awareness Week was observed April 17–23. Each year during National Work Zone Awareness Week, ALDOT promotes work zone safety and public appreciation for the dangerous work that ALDOT is doing to keep roads safe for motorists. This year's theme was "You play a role in work zone safety. Work With Us."

top left ALDOT's 2023 Work Zone Safety Awareness campaign features Xavier Davis who works on a crew in the Southeast Region. This billboard was featured throughout the state in the month of April to bring attention to the real people who are in work zones every day.

middle left Governor Ivey recognized National Work Zone Awareness Week on her social media accounts.

right ALDOT hosted a press conference at the State Capitol Building Auditorium. bottom Employees at ALDOT were asked to support #GoOrangeDay by wearing orange and snapping photos of their offices during National Work Zone Awareness Week.











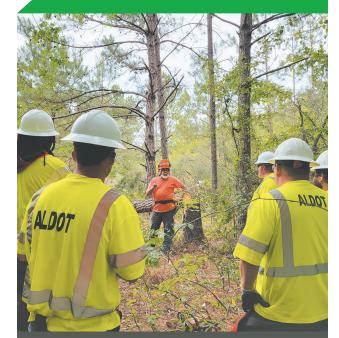






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ALDOT News



Training is Key to Chainsaw Safety

ALDOT employees took hands-on chainsaw training this summer in the West Central Region. The training started with classroom instruction that covered chainsaw components, operations and safety. The employees were instructed on proper personal protection equipment that should always be used when operating a chainsaw.

Following the classroom instruction, employees attended a field day of hands-on demonstration and training. They were shown how to assess a tree before cutting it down. From there they were shown proper cutting techniques before they began cutting trees themselves.

above Instructor Tim Chennault leads
ALDOT crew in Chainsaw Safety Training

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ALDOT Wins Perpetual Pavement Award

ALDOT has been selected to receive a Perpetual Pavement Award for SR 52 (MP 20.537 to MP 28.742) in Geneva County. This marks ALDOT's Fourteenth Perpetual Pavement Award: By Performance. This prestigious award recognizes asphalt pavements which have been designed and built with outstanding care and exceptional quality.

The Asphalt Pavement Alliance developed the prestigious Perpetual Pavement awards to recognize long-life asphalt pavements in the U.S. and honor asphalt pavements demonstrating outstanding design and construction. The alliance is proud to recognize new asphalt roads constructed over an existing road that meet Perpetual Pavement criteria. The nomination was evaluated and selected by the National Center for Asphalt Technology at Auburn University (NCAT). NCAT at Auburn University carefully evaluated this project and determined that it exemplified the high standards set forth in the award criterion.

ALDOT will be presented the award in December of 2023.

2023 Legislative Session Wrap Up

The most recent session of the Alabama legislature came to a close in early June. This session saw the passage of a "hands-free driving bill," several technical bills, and a cost-of-living-increase for all state employees.

Senate Bill 301, sponsored by Senator Jabo Waggoner from Jefferson and Shelby counties, expanded the prohibition against using wireless devices while driving. The bill expands on the existing law, which prohibits the use of devices to write, send, or read text-based communications. The new bill also prohibits the use of devices to access the internet, play games, or watch videos.

The bill also includes a warning period for first-time violators. This means that drivers who are caught using their phones while driving will not be ticketed or fined the first time. Instead, they will be given a warning and told that they could be ticketed if they are caught again. This warning period is intended to educate drivers about the dangers of distracted driving and to encourage them to change their behavior.

The 2023 session also saw the end of a diversion of ALDOT state funds that

began back in the Governor Bob Riley Administration. This year's General Fund budget restored \$23.5 million to the Department, which significantly enhances ALDOT's ability to match available federal funds.

Several very technical bills that will affect ALDOT operations and employees were also passed this session. Governor Kay Ivey signed bills that affect qualifications for projects to be bid, streamlined payment of uncontested Board of Adjustment claims, revised the election process for the Joint Transportation Committee, expanded the purview of the Alabama Transportation Infrastructure Bank, and made changes to in-state travel reimbursement.

Another piece of legislation was passed that will have a direct impact on not only ALDOT personnel but all state employees. House Bill 154, sponsored by Representative Napoleon Bracy, provides a 2 percent salary increase for all state employees, beginning October 1.

ALDOT Statewide Equipment Roadeo Event Winners







All twelve of this year's ALDOT Roadeo winners will compete in the Southeast Regional Equipment Roadeo in West Virginia in September.

top row left to right

Backhoe WinnersAustin Register and Gavin Thompson

Lowboy WinnersBo Williams and Tyrone McCall

Motor Grader Winners Reuben Fairley and Mario Davis



Tractor Mower WinnersBillie Mitchell and Dillon Haley

Tandem Axel Winners Sean Kelly and Brandon Morrow

Single Axel Winners
Paul Jones and Hendrick Austin









ALDOT Leadership Academy Class January 2023

front left to right Jenny Wall, Paige Mulder, Leah Clifton, Ashley Sanders, Jordan Muscat, Rosie Fagg, Tamiko Jordan, Sydney Culbreth, Caitlyn Wright, Haley Adams, Kenya Cannon, Nancy Smith

back left to right Aaron Moses, Jeff Bender, Quentin Richardson, Cooper Calhoun, Jason Daniels, John McWilliams, Seth Burkett, Jason Levandoski, Joey Light, Joseph Williams, Cole Stump, Jonathan Woodham, Will Whaley, James Dugan, Michael Kelly, Cody Fike

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Alabama Transit Drivers Compete

at the 2023 Community Transportation Association of America National Roadeo

The ALDOT Transit Section of the Local Transportation Bureau assists communities around the state with acquiring transit vehicles. Alabama residents can call upon these vehicles to access health care, shopping, education, employment, public services and recreation. The drivers of these vehicles have an opportunity each year to display their knowledge, skills and abilities to the transit vehicles in a national competition.

Two Alabama transit drivers went to Oklahoma City, Oklahoma in May to compete at the Community Transportation Association of America National Roadeo. There were 70 drivers from around the nation in this competition. The two Alabama drivers earned scholarships by winning in the Alabama State

Roadeo. Both drivers were from Baldwin Rural Agency Transit System (BRATS) in Robertsdale. The drivers that competed were Joe Dishman, who finished in third place, and Shannon Dumas who finished in sixth place at the CTAA National Roadeo.

The National Community Transportation Association of America (CTAA) National Roadeo is the only national venue to honor and celebrate the value of rural and community transit drivers, the backbone of the transportation industry. This event draws the best drivers from each state around the country to train and compete in a range of categories, including the transit driver's physical driving abilities, safety operations, and passenger sensitivity. This year, CTAA was proud to partner with the Oklahoma Transit Association

to host the Community Transportation Association of America National Roadeo.

Every year, transit drivers compete at the Alabama State Roadeo to not only qualify to compete in the CTAA National Roadeo, but as continuing education and professional development on safety and customer service skills. This is what leads Alabama to send quality transit drivers to compete nationally and score so high. ALDOT and the Office of Public Transportation (OPT) hope to continue sending such talented drivers to the next CTAA National Roadeo.

top Joe Dishman, from Baldwin Rural Agency Transit Systems (BRATS), placed third.

bottom Shannon Dumas, from Baldwin Rural Agency Transit Systems (BRATS), placed sixth.







Rest Area Winner for the 3rd Quarter

I-65 Northbound Conecuh County





Welcome Center Winner for the 3rd Quarter
I-59 Sumter County Welcome Center
Eartha Wade

Employment Opportunity

In 2022, ALDOT awarded the second-largest dollar amount of projects in the department's history. With the increasing amount of work going on around the state comes the need to hire more employees to support the engineering requirements of the projects. State Personnel has created an Engineering Aide classification that allows ALDOT to fill this position through a direct appointment, which often means the position can be filled more quickly. Interested candidates can visit www.ALDOTjobs.org to view all direct appointment opportunities, including Engineering Aide.

Leadership—A Key to Success at ALDOT

Receiving an award is a humbling experience because a true leader never really expects the recognition.

Jenifer Eubanks, Assistant
Construction Engineer at ALDOT
Southwest Region was awarded the
2022 Build South Award for Industry
Collaboration and Leadership by
the Associated General Contractors
of America in Alabama.

Eubanks was recognized for her dedication and tireless work over the years in planning and organizing local efforts surrounding the annual National Work Zone Awareness Week spring campaign and for her contributions to the industry in Work Zone Safety.

ALDOT congratulates Jenifer for her dedicated leadership!



Jenifer Eubanks awarded the 2022 Build South Award for Industry Collaboration and Leadership

Southeast Region News



Q&A With Sheri Ellis After 37 Years of ALDOT Service

Sheri Ellis began her ALDOT career August 1985 in Maintenance as one of the first bridge rating engineers. She was one of the first groups to complete the "famous" two-week program to become a certified bridge inspector for the Department and she also helped develop the Alabama Bridge Information Management System (ABIMS). In May 2021, Ellis became the Southeast Region Assistant Region Engineer where she remained until her retirement in March 2023.

What's the biggest difference from wher you started until you retired?

The huge advancement in technology which puts the world at our fingertips yet isolates us from those standing beside us. We have so many tools like emails, texts, and video meetings to put us in touch with people, yet we ignore the importance of personal relationships. Our employees are our greatest asset, and we should encourage face-to-face interactions. Social media is a

wonderful tool and a curse. It is great for getting critical messages out concerning conditions of our roadway network, but it is a daily distraction for many and an easy platform for disrespecting others when you can hide behind a screen.

What's the most important thing you learned working at ALDOT?

We all have different roles, and they are *all* important. We need to stop being so

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West Central Region News

Tuscaloosa Area Wins Award



The Maplesville District achieved a milestone in the field of pavement maintenance, as the Tuscaloosa Area took home the prestigious 2023 AEMA Past Presidents' Award for Emulsion Excellence. The award was given for "exceptional work on the US-82 rut fill, leveling, and surface course project." This recognition comes as a result of ALDOT's successful utilization of a micro-surfacing emulsion. Micro-surfacing emulsion is a mixture of aggregate, water and asphalt which is used to protect and maintain the roadway.

The 16.7-mile project on US-82 in Chilton County spanned from the Bibb County line to the Autauga County line, including the Maplesville rest area. This served as a testament to ALDOT's commitment to adopting cost-effective and efficient solutions for pavement maintenance. By incorporating micro-surfacing as a rut-fill solution, ALDOT was able to revolutionize its approach to road repair. This technique proved to be not only effective but also economical.

"District 54 is very excited to receive this recognition," said Sky Hallmon, Maplesville District Administrator. "It gives our district crews, the contractor's crews, and our project



staff a sense of pride by knowing their quality of work is being noticed."

Micro-surfacing emulsion presented numerous advantages. It allowed for the preservation and enhancement of the existing pavement, extending its lifespan considerably. Additionally, the micro-surfacing emulsion filled the ruts and provided a smooth surface, enhancing safety and a better drive. This innovative approach also resulted in significant cost savings, amounting to an impressive \$2,318,844. This figure starkly contrasts with more traditional methods such as the mill-and-fill approach.

"When the district knew the project was given notice to proceed, we immediately began the sealing of the cracks in the pavement," Hallmon said. "This was the first step and the foundation of the project. The timing of the project and the hard work of all involved contributed to the quality of the end product."

By embracing this technique, ALDOT demonstrated its commitment to staying at the forefront of innovation in the field of transportation infrastructure. The award highlights the department's commitment to maximizing value for taxpayers while ensuring the safety and longevity of the state's transportation network.

"The results of this project are definitely a point of pride and a job well done," Hallmon said. "Through the collaborative efforts of the ALDOT district crews, Whitaker Contracting Corporation and the ALDOT construction staff, this project shows the people of Alabama that pavement preservation projects are an efficient use of tax dollars."

protective of our 'turf' and recognize that we are all on the same team. No one is indispensable, so don't let your ego get in the way.

Any advice for those just starting at ALDOT?

Give 110 percent on everything you do—not for others, but for yourself. Remember that DOT is a service agency, so look for ways to help others. Always treat everyone with respect—your subordinate today may be your boss tomorrow.

What's one of the funniest memories you

When I became pregnant with my first child but had not yet made it public. As one of two bridge raters, I could only smile when my co-worker, Dee Rowe, announced one day that she was expecting her second child.

Because we were always pranking somebody, I knew that when I announced I too was expecting that nobody would believe me.

Sure enough, when we told our supervisor that we were both due in December, not only did he not believe me, but he also decided that she probably wasn't telling the truth either. Time was the deciding factor and we had lots of fun with that.



Sheri Ellis



SR-157 Celebrated with Ribbon-Cutting

Gov. Kay Ivey, state legislators, and city officials came together May 1 to celebrate the opening of two additional lanes on SR-157 in Cullman with a ribbon-cutting ceremony.

The completion of the \$19.5 million project capped off decades of planning and construction of the four-lane corridor through northwest Alabama, from the Shoals to east of Cullman. The busy 4½-mile segment between US-31 and SR-69, which is near Interstate 65 and the site of Cullman Regional Medical Center, was the last to be widened to four lanes.

Bridges for the northbound roadway over Lake Catoma and the railroad were constructed by ALDOT in a separate project completed in 2013 at a cost of nearly \$9 million, but a project to construct the roadway was slow to follow due to flat funding and rising construction costs in the years leading up to passage of the Rebuild Alabama Act.

But then the city secured a \$14 million federal Better Utilizing Investments to Leverage Development (BUILD) grant, putting the project on the fast track. A combination of state, city and other federal funding would cover the remaining costs.

On a \$14.9 million contract, Chilton Contractors Inc. began construction of the new northbound roadway for ALDOT in late 2020. Two-and-half years later, Gov. Ivey



Gov. Kay Ivey and other officials gather for the SR-157 ribbon-cutting ceremony.

spoke to a large crowd in the parking lot of Northbrook Baptist Church, overlooking the newly-expanded highway, which includes signal upgrades and a multi-use path.

"It's evident industry always chases after infrastructure, and as our economy continues on its record-breaking, upward trajectory, we must continue to ensure Alabama remains connected and traffic flows," Gov. Ivey said. "When interstate access is limited, economic development is hampered and access to schools, health care and facilities that house our basic, daily necessities are limited. And as North Alabama continues to remain prosperous and abundant with opportunities for growth, the need for a widened highway is more apparent than ever."

State Sen. Garlan Gudger, State Rep. Randall Shedd, and Cullman Mayor Woody Jacobs joined the governor in praising the teamwork that went into the project—a longtime dream for many in the area.

"This project is a perfect example of how to blend local, state, and federal resources to complete a much-needed project," Jacobs said. "Director (John) Cooper and his ALDOT team provided great support and guidance throughout the process. Many people worked to make this widening project a reality, particularly our federal delegation. Senator Richard Shelby and his staff and Congressman Robert Aderholt and his staff were instrumental in moving this forward."

"This project was special because it had regional support and implications. Now, we have an improved transportation artery that improves traffic flow and safety while also allowing for business growth," Jacobs said.



Southeast Region News

Growth and Population Boom in Baldwin County Addressed by ALDOT Baldwin County had a net gain of more than 7,000 residents from the middle of 2021 to the middle of 2022, the most of any county in Alabama, according to census population estimates released in 2022.

The estimate is the latest sign that Baldwin's rapid growth over the past several decades is not slowing down. In fact, it appears to be accelerating. Over the last decade, the county added an average of 4,950 residents a year. Since 2020, the population has

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Leaders Announce Next Phase of Birmingham Northern Beltline



Gov. Kay Ivey joined Congressman Gary Palmer, ALDOT East Central Region Engineer DeJarvis Leonard, and numerous local officials on May 11 in Gardendale to announce the next phase of construction on the Birmingham Northern Beltline.

With \$489 million in federal funding secured, ALDOT will plan to construct a 10-mile segment of the Beltline that connects US-31 near Gardendale to SR-75 near Pinson. This 10-mile segment will be a four-lane highway that is expected to be completed by the end of 2028.

"We're making tremendous progress all across the state to build and improve our highways and bridges," said Governor Ivey. "The Northern Beltline will be an essential link that connects communities, families and workers to jobs, opportunity, emergency services and so much more."

Congressman Palmer, who sponsored legislation that provides critical federal funding for the Northern Beltline, said, "Birmingham is currently one of the largest metropolitan areas in the country without a complete beltline around it. The Northern Beltline will benefit the entire region and enhance economic development and employment."

The announcement at the Gardendale Civic Center, featuring dozens of elected leaders from the federal, state and local levels of government as well as the region's business community, was a show of force demonstrating broad support for the Northern Beltline. More than 40 cities, three counties and numerous businesses throughout the region have voiced support for the Northern Beltline through resolutions and other statements.

Gardendale Mayor Stan Hogeland said the 10-mile segment would be a "giant step

forward" for an infrastructure project that helps more communities compete for major economic development projects.

"By providing interstate access to areas that are currently isolated from the national transportation system, the Northern Beltline will make so many communities in northern Jefferson County, Blount County and St. Clair County more attractive to job creators," said Mayor Hogeland. "That's one reason why this project has such wide-ranging support."

Homewood City Councilor Jennifer Andress said, "Aside from its economic impact, the Northern Beltline will also help improve emergency responders' ability to assist citizens in need, whether it is from a disaster like a tornado or an individual needing an ambulance, the fire department or law enforcement."





increased by 14,674 people to 246,435. ALDOT recognizes more people mean more vehicles on local roadways

The second phase of widening the SR-181 corridor to four lanes from County Road 64 in Daphne to County Road 104 in Fairhope was completed in May of this year.

Complementing the area's widening projects is the US-31 widening project from SR-225 to SR-181 in Spanish Fort which provides

motorists with a new 5-lane highway to help address growing infrastructure needs.

Along the coastal communities, the department is working with the cities of Foley and Gulf Shores under the Regional Traffic Operations Services program to upgrade and synchronize traffic signals allowing for a smoother commute during peak travel times.





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Send comments or story ideas to ansleyh@dot.state.al.us

Employees: Be sure to keep your mailing address updated with your office manager.

Upcoming ALDOT Conferences

CEME Annual Conference

September 6-8, 2023, Birmingham

Alabama Road Safety Conference October 17-19, 2023, Florence

Alabama Transportation Conference February 6-7, 2024, Birmingham